NO. 15
BLONDE PHANTOM
10¢
STOP, JENNY! PUT DOWN THAT GUN! YOU CAN'T FIX THINGS WITH A BULLET! JENNY! LISTEN TO ME... DON'T DO IT... DON'T!
I'LL GET THAT SKUNK! I'LL GIVE HIM WHAT HE DESERVES BEFORE HE CAN DO TO OTHER TRUSTING GIRLS WHAT HE DID TO ME! I WON'T LET HIM ROB THAT POOR KID IN THERE! AND DON'T TRY TO STOP ME, I'M WARNING YOU!
ACME DETECTIVE AGENCY
SURE, BABY--STICK WITH ME AND I'LL PUT YOUR NAME IN LIGHTS! I'LL MAKE YA A STAR, BABY. YES SIR, A STAR! NOW LEMME HAVE THE FIRST PAYMENT, TO FIX THE DEAL!
EVERYBODY WANTED TO KILL HIM! AND SOMEBODY DID!!! BUT THE BLONDE PHANTOM AND MARY MASON DIDN'T DREAM THAT HIS DEATH WOULD BRING THEM SO CLOSE TO THE BRINK OF DISASTER!
DON'T MISS THIS SENSATIONALLY GRIPPING TALE OF TANGLED LIVES!
"THE MAN WHO DESERVED TO DIE!"

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BLONDE PHANTOM
ALL RIGHT, MASON — WE'VE GOT THE GOODS ON YOU! CONFESS, MASON, CONFESS!
HE DID IT, I KNOW! MARK MASON IS THE KILLER!
FOR EVERY STARRY-EYED GIRL WHO SEEKS FAME AND FORTUNE ON BROADWAY THERE'S A CUNNING TRICKSTER TO PROMISE HER THE MOON, AND STEAL HER LAST PENNY! HERE IS STARTLING ADVENTURE ON THE GREAT WHITE WAY AS MARK MASON FACES A MURDER CHARGE AND THE BLONDE PHANTOM FOLLOWS A DANGER TRAIL SEEKING THE ANSWER TO THE VIOLENT DEATH OF...
"The MAN who DESERVED to DIE!"

ORDINARILY THE VIEW IN FRONT OF MARK MASON'S WINDOW IS NOT VERY INTERESTING, BUT AS IT NOW HAPPENS...
SURE! YOU'RE SAFE FROM THE LAW, "TWISELER"!
PLEASE MARK---I'LL TRY TO HELP EVERY ACTRESS WHO PAYS MY FEE!
MARK HAS GONE CALLING ON "TWISELER" HOGAN, THEATRICAL AGENT!
THAT TEMPER OF MARK'S MIGHT VERY EASILY LAND HIM IN REAL TROUBLE!
SOMETHING'S WRONG WITH THAT GIRL!
YOU ALL RIGHT, LADY?
MASON--- DON'T! LOOK!
OF COURSE!
I'M PERFECTLY ALL RIGHT!
YOU DO NEED A PLACE TO REST FOR A FEW MINUTES!
CRASH
AS THE BLONDE PHANTOM ENTERS THE HELL-MAN SHE SEES A GIRL COMING OUT OF AN ELEVATOR AND...
REST ROOM
MASON, STOP!
I'LL--BUT I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH HOGAN DOWN THE HALL!
I DON'T THINK MR. HOGAN IS SEEING ANY ONE RIGHT NOW, MISS!
CRASH
HE'S IN ER, IN CONFERENCE WITH MARK MASON!
THIS IS WHAT I THINK OF PUNKS WHO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF STAR-STRUCK GALS!

I'M JENNIFER SCOTT! I MUST SEE BERT HOGAN!
POOR KID! PROBABLY HUNGRY LIVING ON HOGAN'S PROMISES!
DOUBLE ORDER OF HAM-AND-EGGS FROM ME MASON'S OFFICE! PLENTY OF COFFEE!
WELL, LOUISE, AT LEAST I HAVE THAT LOVE NEST, BLONDE PHANTOM!
HELLO, MARK! LOOKS AS IF YOUR SECRETARY STEPPED OUT FOR LUNCH!
MEET JENNIFER SCOTT! SHE HAS SOME BUSINESS WITH BERT HOGAN!
ANOTHER ONE WHO HAS FLUNKED DOWN—FOR NOTHING! I JUST WARNED HIM TO CUT IT OUT! IT'S A DIRTY RACKET!
MR HOGAN ARRANGED AN AUDITION FOR ME TONIGHT, WITH COLONEL DA, THE PRODUCER!
HMPH! THE COLONEL HASN'T PRODUCED ANYTHING BUT FLOPS IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS!
AND CHISELER HASN'T LANDED AN ACTRESS A PART IN TEN YEARS!
BUT I GAVE MR HOGAN MY LAST $50! I CAN'T PAY MY RENT!
AND YOU'RE HUNGRY, AND NEED A JOB!
IT'S THE SAME OLD STORY, POOR KID!
COME TO THINK OF IT, WE NEED ANOTHER GIRL AROUND HERE TO HELP LOUISE!
EGGS 'N HAM AND COFFEE, MR. MASON!
JUST THEN, THE BOY ARRIVES WITH THE FOOD AND COFFEE..

CHEE, MR. MASON, DOJA SEE THE COPS OUTSIDE? THEY'RE SAYING BERT HOGAN IS MOIDERED! DEADY!
"CHISELER"— DEAD?
YEAH, MARK, HE'S DEAD AND THE FUTURE DON'T LOOK SO ROSY FOR YOU! MY LETTER OPENER!
YOUR KNUCKLES ON IT— WE FOUND IT STUCK IN HOGAN'S JAW! LOOK AT THOSE KNUCKLES!
SURE! I DID SOCK HOGAN!
BUT THAT'S ALL! I JUST SOCKED HIM!
HE DIDN'T KILL HOGAN, BOYS! BE SENSIBLE!
MARK MASON DETECTIVE AGENCY
LISSEN, I'M ONLY A COP AND I BELIEVE WHAT I SEE!
LOOKS LIKE I'M IN A TOUGH SPOT THIS TIME, BLONDE PHANTOM!
BETTER CHEW SOME CALORIES, JENNIFER! BOTH OF US ARE GOING TO NEED PLENTY OF ZIP TO GET MARK OUT OF THIS JAM!
DON'T WORRY, MARK—I'LL FIND SOME WAY TO CLEAR YOU OF THIS ABSURD CHARGE!

A FEW MINUTES LATER AT THE DEAD MAN'S ROOM...
MIND IF I LOOK AROUND, BOYS?
THINGS SURE LOOK BAD FOR MASON! SURE, GO AHEAD, BLONDE PHANTOM!
SOMEONE MIGHT HAVE HIDDEN HERE WHILE MARK WAS WITH CHISELER!
NO ONE WITH THIS KIND OF HIM THOUGHT
I WONDER WHAT KIND OF INFORMATION ROBIN KEPT IN HIS FILE...ON JENNIFER SCOTT, FOR INSTANCE?
WHITNEY BOWMAN!
JENNIFER SCOTT! ARE SHE AND WHITNEY BOWMAN SECRETLY MARRIED? SOMETHING TO INVESTIGATE!
AND HERE'S A CARD ON ANOTHER ACTRESS, TINA STELMA! SAME AGE! SPEAKS DUTCH, BUT SOPHISTICATED TYPE! AND SHE IS RECOMMENDED FOR MAX HARDING!
MAX HARDING? SAY, ISN'T HE THE GUY WHO HAS THE FAMOUS COLLECTION OF DUTCH PAINTINGS?
THE SAME AND WHITNEY BOWMAN IS PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL OIL — HAS ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS COLLECTIONS OF RARE CHINA IN THE WORLD! BOTH OF THESE MEN COLLECT OBJECTS OF ART!
5

AND BACK AGAIN IN MARK MASON'S OFFICE...
JENNIFER, WHAT DID BERT HOGAN TELL YOU ABOUT WHITNEY BOWMAN?
NOTHING MUCH, EXCEPT THAT COLONEL BELLA WAS GIVING A PARTY FOR HIM TONIGHT!
AND MR. HOGAN SAID THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT I BE ABLE TO TALK TO HIM ABOUT CERTAIN PIECES OF RARE CHINA!
IT MIGHT BE ENLIGHTENING TO HAVE A TALK WITH BOWMAN MYSELF ABOUT THIS RARE CHINA! THEN TO SEE MAX MARKOVA!
HOLD THE FORT, JENNIFER! IF I LEARN ANYTHING IMPORTANT, I'LL CALL YOU RIGHT AWAY!
THERE'S NO REASON IN THE WORLD WHY I SHOULDN'T DO SOME SNOOPING FOR MARK MASON ON MY OWN!
LATER, INSIDE THE ELEGANT TOWN HOUSE OF WHITNEY BOWMAN...
MY DEAR, YOU'RE INTERESTED IN RARE CHINA? LOOK AT THIS FOR COLOR FOR WORKMANSHIP! PRICELESS! EACH ONE OF THEM!
I HEARD THAT THE WAR PREVENTED YOU FROM COMPLETING THE COLLECTION, MR. BOWMAN!
AH, THE WAR! FRIGHTFUL DESTRUCTION! I'M AFRAID THAT THE PIECES MISSING FROM THIS COLLECTION ARE GONE FOREVER!
LOST— OR MERELY STOLEN BY THE NAZIS?
WHO KNOWS?
RUMOR HAS IT THAT CERTAIN PEOPLE HAVE HERE WITH NAZI LOOT! PERHAPS THE VERY PIECES THAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR!

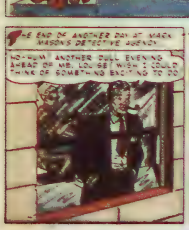
BUT OF COURSE A MAN IN YOUR POSITION WOULDN'T BUY STOLEN PROPERTY!
HE CERTAINLY NOT!
MEANWHILE
DEAR ME! COLONEL BELLA MUST BE VERY RICH!
THIS WAY, MISS!
COLONEL BELLA, I'M JENNIFER SCOTT FROM MR. HOGAN'S AGENCY. BEFORE MR. HOGAN WAS KILLED HE TOLD ME ABOUT YOUR PARTY
I'M SORRY I'M LATE
WHITNEY BOWMAN!
AH, SO? ALL ABOUT MY LIKED PARTY HERE?
BUT HE DIDN'T TELL ME WHY YOU WANTED ME TO TALK TO MR. BOWMAN ABOUT RARE CHINA!
YOU WERE TO PLAY ZEE DAUGHTER OF AN OLD FRENCHMAN! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR PAPA IS DOING- SELLING MAZI LOOT IN MEXICO! SOME OF ZAT LOOT IS TWO RARE CHINA ZAT BOWMAN IS LOOKING FOR!
THEN, WE HOPE BOWMAN BECOMES VERY EXCITED! HE WANTS TO GO TO MEXICO TO BUY!
BUT, WON'T MR. BOWMAN BE AWFULLY DISAPPOINTED WHEN HE FINDS NO ONE IN MEXICO?
AH, BUT I SHALL BE THERE! I AM YOUR PAPA AND I SHALL TAKE HIS MONEY! $100,000!

TAKE HIS MONEY?
AH, SUCH A PLAN! I SHALL TEACH HIM THE VALUABLE LESSON THAT IT IS NOT NICE EVEN TO TRY TO BUY NAZI LOOT... WITH A GUN IN MY HAND!
BOWMAN IS A RESPECTED MAN WHO WILL NOT EVEN SAY "BOO" — HIMSELF! HAS TRIED TO DO SOMETHING AGAINST THE LAW!
I'M GOING TO CALL THE POLICE RIGHT NOW!
AGH! SUCH A LIBOLE-IDIOTY! WE SHALL QUIETLY SIP TEA UNTIL THE BLONDE PHANTOM COMES HERE TO QUESTION ME AND THEN...
MEANWHILE, THE BLONDE PHANTOM PAYS A VISIT TO MR. HARDING...
READ ALL ABOUT IT! FAMOUS DETECTIVE MURDERED IN TRIBUNAL COURTS!
DO YOU HEAR THAT, MR. HARDING? AN INNOCENT MAN HAS BEEN ACCUSED OF MURDER! YOUR NAME — ALONG WITH BOWMAN'S, APPEARS IN HOGAN'S FILES!
I'M TELLING THE TRUTH, BLONDE PHANTOM! I NEVER HEARD OF HOGAN UNTIL TODAY!
BUT — COLONEL BELLA — YOU HAVE HEARD OF HIM!
UNFORTUNATELY YES!
NOW WE'RE GETTING SOMEPLACE! WAS COLONEL BELLA BY ANY CHANCE TRYING TO SELL YOU NAZI LOOT IN THE FORM OF OLD MASTER PAINTINGS?
NOT THE COLONEL HIMSELF! HE'S FAR TOO GOOD A SHOWMAN FOR THAT. EVEN IF HE HAS LOST MOST OF HIS MONEY ON BROADWAY FLOPS!
THEN THE OLLIN, CIEL MADE THE PLANS! TINA STELMA! SHE CONTACTED YOU!

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT! I'LL TELL YOU: THIS GIRL INNOCENTLY, I BELIEVE, PLAYED A PART! I TOLD MARMY A DUTCH UNCLE OF HERS IN MEXICO HAD TWO REMBRANDTS LOOTED BY THE NAZIS!
AND TWO WEEKS AGO, I WENT TO MEXICO WITH $250,000 IN CASH, ITCHING TO BUY! INSTEAD OF A DUTCH UNCLE I MET COLONEL BELLA IN A HOTEL ROOM. HE TOOK THE CASH AND DARED ME TO CALL THE POLICE!
IN EXCHANGE I GOT NOTHING BUT A GOOD LESSON IN COLLECTOR'S ETHICS!
ONE PHONE CALL, MR. HARDIN, AND I THINK, MARK MASON IS CLEARED! THEN FOR A VISIT TO COLONEL BELLA!
UH-HUH!
HOWEVER, A SHORT TIME LATER...
THIS MAY MISS! THE COLONEL IS EXPECTING YOU
SUCH HOSPITALITY!
JENNY! YOU HERE?
JUST SO! YOU HAVE BOTH WALKED INTO THE WOLF'S LAIR!
I SUPPOSE BY NOW YOU HAVE MADE CERTAIN CLEVER DEDUCTIONS - EVEN YOU HAVE LOCATED SWORDSMAN'S RUGS, WHICH I DID NOT HAVE TIME TO CLEAN OUT!
AFTER YOU STUCK MARMY'S KNIFE INTO MORGAN!
BAH! SAT TWISELEY TRIED TO CHARGE ME A FEE WHEN HE BLUNDERED INTO MY REAL PLANS!
THAT MUST TRY YOUR PATIENCE A GREAT DEAL, COLONEL!

POOF! SO I KILLED HIM FORTUNATELY WITH A SCARF! SCARF MALONE ON HAND TO GIVE ME TIME!
VIC COLONEL BULLET
COLONEL! TIME TO GET BOWMAN INTERESTED IN A TRIP TO MEXICO WHILE I SNEAK HIM OF... HE'LL REMAIN AFTER I'VE SEEN TO...
COLONEL!
CAREFUL, BOYS! THEY'LL SHOOT JENNIFER!
COPS!
I'M NOT GOING TO BE BOWMAN WHEN HE SNEAKS AWAY! THE POLICE!
LIKE I'M A TAXPAYER SAVING AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE!
MY...
SOMEBODY JUST DON'T LOSE MY TOUCH!
UGH!
MARK, I THINK WE MIGHT INTEREST DOWNAS AND SNEDDIG IN PUTTING A LITTLE LOOSE CHANGE ON 42ND STREET! AND NATURALLY THEY'D WELCOME A SUGGESTION FOR THE INGENUE LEAD!
I'D SO MUCH LIKE TO SEE HER! BUT OKAY, NOW I'VE GOT TO SAY...
WHAT DO YOU SAY TO SOME MORE WORK, A FEW AND SORREE? I'M STARVED!
INCLUDE ME IN!
CLICK

BLONDE PHANTOM



HE NEVER NOTICES ME! ALL HE EVER THINKS OF IS THE BLONDE PHANTOM!
GOSH, IF I COULD ONLY BE LIKE THE BLONDE PHANTOM, LINES! WE COULD HAVE A WONDERFUL TIME TOGETHER!
SEE WHAT I MEAN?
WELL, EVERYTHING'S A-LYIN' TODAY MARK! SEE YOU IN THE MORNING!
SAY, WAIT A MINUTE, LOUISE! HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO...?
HUH? YES, WHAT IS IT, MARK?
WELL?... ER... NEVER MIND! IT WASN'T IMPORTANT! GOOD NIGHT, LOUISE!
THAT'S WHAT I CALL A QUICK RE-ACTION YOU HAVE!
HUH? NOW WHAT'S SHE SO MAD ABOUT?
GOOD NIGHT!

AND SO...
ANOTHER EVENING ALONE WITH LIFE ROMANCES, AND MORE LIFE ROMANCES!
HE WAS GAZED INTO HER BLUE EYES, HE MURMURED: I LOVE YOU!" (SIGH!)
LIFE ROMANCES
HO-HUM! I'M SO SLEEPY!
OH, LOUISE, I LOVE YOU! I'VE ALWAYS LOVED YOU!
DEAREST MARK! AND I LOVE YOU TOO!
WUV, HELLO, MARK! HOPE I'M NOT INTERRUPTING ANYTHING?
BLONDE PHANTOM! BOY, AM I GLAD TO SEE YOU!
BLONDE PHANTOM? BUT I'M SUPPOSED TO BE HER! I MEAN, SHE'S ME..??
I LOVE YOU, BEAUTIFUL! I'VE ALWAYS LOVED YOU!
YOU SAY THE CUTEST THINGS, MARK!

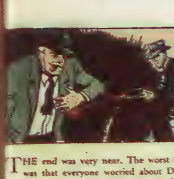
BUT YOU PROMISED TO DANCE WITH ME, MARK!
GO AWAY LOUISE... CAN'T YOU SEE I'M BUSY?
HOW ABOUT SOME TWINGS TO EAT, GORGEOUS?
WHY, YOU LOW-DOWN THIEF YOU FOUR-FLUSHER, YOU!
YOU FOUR-FLUSHER, YOU... OUCH!
GOSH, I MUST HAVE FALLEN ASLEEP! SO IT WAS ONLY A DREAM!
OH, WHY DON'T YOU STAY OUT OF MY DREAMS?
THE NEXT MORNING
AH, GOOD MORNING, LOUISE!
DON'T YOU DARE SPEAK TO ME, YOU TWO-TIMER, YOU FOUR-FLUSHER, YOU!
NOW, WHAT DID I DO? ONE MOMENT SHE'S SWEET AND THE NEXT SHE NEVER UNDERSTANDS 'EM!

SUB-MARINER
U.S.
2
CE
U.S. POSTAGE
2
5
CENTS
CREATE DEALS IN STAMPS!
ONE DAY, AT THE WATERFRONT...
READY FOR YOUR MORNING EXERCISE, NAMORA?
YES, PRINCE NAMOR, LET'S RACE TO "FATHER TIME'S" LIGHTHOUSE!
GOOD! AND WE'LL PAY A VISIT TO "FATHER TIME" HIMSELF — WE HAVEN'T SEEN HIM IN A COUPLE OF WEEKS!

AT THAT MOMENT, KINDLY OLD "FATHER TIME" THE LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER, IS LOOKING THROUGH HIS VALUABLE STAMP COLLECTION...
I'D BE MIGHTY LONESOME OUT HERE WITHOUT MY STAMPS. BEEN SAVIN' 'EM FER YEARS... MUS' BE WORTH A'TIDY SUM BY NOW!
A MOTOR BOAT PULLS UP TO THE ISLAND, AND...
MOMENTS LATER!
AH! JUST THE MAN I WANT TO SEE!
WHA...? SAY! WHO ARE YA?
I HEARD ABOUT YER STAMP COLLECTION! I'M OFFERIN' YA A THOUSAND EVERS FER IT!
YOU'RE DAFT, MAN! I'M NOT SELLING IT TANYONE! NOW GIT OUT O' HERE!
IN THAT CASE, I'LL TAKE IT, FER NOTHIN', YA STUBBORN OLD FOOL!
IT'S CHEAPER THIS WAY, ANYHOW! AN' NO ONE WILL KNOW THAT I, THE PIRATE HAVE BEEN HERE!
BANG BANG
A WHILE LATER, THE SWIMMING DUO REACHES IT'S DESTINATION...
HA! BEAT YOU AGAIN!
YOU'RE IMPROVING, VAMORA! NOW LET'S CALL IT "FATHER TIME"!

THEN!
"S "FATHER TIME") HE'S BEEN SHOT!
OH-IS HE...
DEAD—POOR OLD FELLOW WE'VE GOT A CASE ON OUR HANDS, NAMORA!
THERE'S A COUPLE OF STAMPS ON HIS DESK! BUT WHERE'S HIS BIG ALBUM? IT'S GONE! HE ALWAYS KEPT IT HERE!
SO THAT'S IT! SOMEONE STOLE HIS VALUABLE COLLECTION! PROBABLY TO SELL IT TO A DEALER! AND HE HAD TO COMMIT MURDER TO GET IT!
LOOK, PRINCE NAMOR! LOOKS AS IF HE WAS TRYING TO WRITE SOMETHING WITH HIS PIPE STEM BEFORE HE DIED!
A SKULL AND CROSSBONES! THE INSIGNIA OF A PIRATE! PIRATE! COULD HE HAVE BEEN ACCUSING PIRATE FLETCHER AS HIS MURDERER?
SWIFT SECONDS LATER...
C'MON, NAMORA! FIRST WE'LL REPORT TO THE HARBOR POLICE! THEN FOR A BIT TO "PIRATE" FLETCHER'S WATERFRONT CAFE!
GOOD... A PRETTY TOUGH BUNCH HANGS AROUND HERE! MAYBE YOU'D BETTER STAY OUTSIDE, NAMORA!
NOTHING DOING! WE'RE WORKING TOGETHER AS ALWAYS! I'M GOING WITH YOU!
PIRATE FLETCHER'S CAFE

WONDER WHERE PRATT IS? SAY! THAT MAN OVER THERE BACK ROOM IS A FAMOUS DIAMOND DEALER
NOW I'M SURE FLETCHER IS OUR MAN
TAKE A LOOK! OLD MAN SMITH'S STAMPS! FINE, WE'LL CUT WHAT THEY'RE WORTH
HMM. THIS FRENCH GUIANA STAMP IS WORTH AT LEAST SIX THOUSAND!
THEN! GET READY FOR THE PAY-OFF KILLER!
SUB-MARINER!
THIS ONE IS FOR FATHER AND ME!
THE POLICE APPEAR ON THE SCENE, AND..
AND THIS ONE IS FOR ME!
OH NO YOU'LL DO NO STABBING IN THE BACK!
OWW!
THANKS FOR YOUR HELP SUB-MARINER
ARRANGE FOR A PUBLIC AUCTION OF THE STAMPS! THE OLD SAILORS' HOME NEEDS FUNDS BADLY! I'M SURE FATHER AND I WOULD WANT THE MONEY TO HELP OLD SEA-FARING FRIENDS!
THE END



BLAZING GLORY

THE end was very near. The worst of it was that everyone worried about Detective Mike Clancy. Papa Mike to the force. Thirty-six years had been a long time and now, with the end almost a reality, Mike found it didn't look so good. If only everyone weren't so solicitous . . .

"You'd think," Mike mourned to himself, "I hadn't been a cop all these years and couldn't stand on my own two feet."

Which definitely wasn't the case. Mike had plenty of footage to stand on. But of late his side had become sublittary. Nothing had happened. Everyone in the department, from top to bottom almost, seemed bitten by a protective urge.

Now Mike stalked down the hall just as someone burst out of a side office. Mike avoided collision by dexterously side-stepping. "Blow your horn—sazay. What's eating you, Philly?"

Phil paused. The scowl grudgingly slid away from his youthful face, to be replaced by a patronizing smile. "Everything's honey and sugar. Just waiting for the bees . . ."

"Cut it out. You forget you're trying to sell a vet, sonny boy."

Philly's forced smile slid into dark uneasiness. "The works are coming down from upstairs. It's getting too hot."

"Bartander case?" Coming from Papa Mike it was a statement. "Pulled his old stunt again, eh?"

Philly snapped his fingers. "Gone into thin air. The old man's going to have the case busted or—us!"

Mike Clancy's mind moved smoothly. Bartander had a reputation that stretched fat and wide, and took in everything from the petty rackets on up to murder and kidnapping. His cleverness had slipped him through the cops' fingers too often.

Mike's eyes twinkled as he turned away. "Bartander interests me. I'll be seeing you."

"Hey, wait—"

Mike Clancy was aware of Philly behind him, cussing under his breath. Philly was a nice kid but he didn't know the ropes too well. And there were a couple of angles that could stand checking. Mike wondered that he hadn't thought of them until just now.

Over at the county clerk's office, Papa Mike Clancy worked slowly and methodically. By the middle of the afternoon he had the lists he wanted. One contained farms and summer cottages owned and operated. The second was a listing of parcels to be put up for auction for unpaid taxes.

Mike Clancy walked into the street. Sliding behind the wheel of his coupe, he drove off. His eyes were a thoughtful, hard blue. Briefly he glanced at the list he'd made up at the clerk's office.

Process of elimination. It didn't take too long. By evening Mike Clancy had checked off a good half of his prospects. In most cases all he needed was a single glance to tell him it wasn't any use wasting time on further investigation. Now there was one more stop near-by and after that . . .

Parking the coupe in the woods, Mike Clancy got out and moved stealthily through the darkness. Eventually he came to a break in the underbrush. At one spot he found what were obviously the tire marks. At another place the weeds were high and strong, showing a dab of grease. Yes, a car had recently come along this way.

Mike Clancy pushed through the woods, until he came within sight of a farm house.

Continued

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Carefully he circled. The windows were boarded over. The back stoop was in need of repairs, and the paint was peeling off in long, ugly strips. Charlesville he continued the investigation, which eventually took him through a casement window into a cellar where he stumbled over something on the floor. It was pliant and soft, like a body.

It was a body. Mike's fingers told him. There was a wet stickiness, too. For a second Mike crouched on his heels. He risked a light, unburned it again with a faint, sharp intake of breath.

Philly lay on the floor, trussed and gagged. His eyes were closed and blood had spattered his face and shoulders. But he was still breathing. Swiftly then he cut the young detective's bonds, removed the gag. He straightened him out on the floor and comforted as gently.

Once more Mike Clancy moved on. This time he found the stairs. The door at the head of them opened easily. Indeed, too easily for a locked door. Mike Clancy stepped through. His .38 was ready in one big paw.

Slowly, he slid forward, his big feet noiseless on the bare boards. There was an angry shout in the next room. Philly in the cellar. Philly had evidently gotten a load. He'd dropped up somewhere along the way . . .

A door. Voices from beyond. Mike Clancy rolled the knob gently. A second later he was inside.

The odds were three to one. Trigger work was fast. The concussion of shots left a loud ringing in Mike Clancy's ears. Across the room he had the satisfaction of seeing two of the roughly dressed gangsters double up and go down. The third had been one too many—

Mike Clancy felt the smashing impact of a bullet. He body spun away, struck the wall and slid forward—

Savagely Mike Clancy fought against unconsciousness. He was on his feet, swaying limply, grinding his teeth against the almost intolerable desire to let go. Dimly, he realized that the third member had leaped into the hall beyond. Barlander himself!

Lucky guy. Always. Even in the past—

Page Mike Clancy shoved himself forward. The threatening darkness was gone now and his body was coordinated. He slammed himself into the hall. Silence closed about him. Barlander was escaping.

The front of the house faced the county road. Mike Clancy plunged forward, ripped the door open and leaped through. He floundered down the steps, raced around the side of the house—

Nowhere could he see or hear anything. Had Barlander escaped through the back into the woods? For a moment Mike paused, aware for the first time that he was weaponless. After the impact of that bullet he had acted automatically. . . .

Somewhere a lock scrapped. The back door . . . Mike slid forward. He groped at one of the steps leading up to the stoop. Rotted wood crumbled. Mike placed the stepboard at an angle. He darted back, pressed against the wall.

Someone lurched across the porch and down the stairs—

A board snapped crunchingly. A flying figure hurtled forward, sprawled to the ground. There was a savage cursing and trembling—

But Mike Clancy moved in, his big body functioning swiftly. He was over the tumbled figure as it came erect. Mike's big fist crashed in, smothering the white face almost completely with its hugeness. He felt the crushing of bone under the impact. He felt a sense of gratitude and relief rush at him as he saw Barlander's slinks body fly helplessly through the air. Animal courage brought him staggering to his feet. . . .

Once more Mike Clancy was waiting and ready. Again his fist crushed in, slamming with all the power of his aching body. This time Barlander went down to stay.

Feebly Mike Clancy stared down. He ached all over. But it was done now. The next thing was to get this killer tied up, get Philly back to town.

It wouldn't be long now, Mike Clancy suddenly remembered. He was going out on pension, but now he wouldn't mind. He wasn't going in the prostate, disinterested way of something being shelved forever. He was going with his shield, not upon it. Going in a blaze of glory.

THE END

BLONDE PHANTOM
GLAMOUR CAN BE FATAL!"

IN THE OFFICE OF MALEK MASON, PRIVATE DETECTIVE...
NOT BAD, LOUISE, NOT BAD! DE FENN CERTAINLY KNOWS HOW TO CHOOSE AN ADVISOR!
HMMM.
MALEK MASON
A DISH, SURE THE GIRL TO BRING THE WOMEN OF FENN'S LITTLE REPUBLIC RIGHT UP TO DATE!
TIBETAN President and Advisor Arrive on Hudson Bay Shopping Spree!
TOO BAD DE FENN'S HAND IS CRAMPED FROM SIGNING AUTOGRAPHS IN APPRECIATION OF YOUTHFUL TOURIST!
I'M TAKING THE AFTERNOON OFF... FOR A LITTLE SHOPPING OF MY OWN!
HEY, LOUISE- NOTHING PERSONAL, PERSONAL'S I LIKE SECRETARIES TO DRESS CONSERVATIVELY!
LOUISE GRAVY- CONSERVATIVE? PERHAPS, BUT NOT AS THE BLONDE PHANTOM!
MEM! IF MALEK ONLY OPENED HIS EYES TO SOMETHING BESIDES DE FENN'S ETHICS HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN SOMETHING REALLY INTERESTING IN THE NEWS PHOTO!
AND INSIDE THE CONSULATE...
MEANWHILE, WITHIN THE CONSULATE OF THE REPUBLIC OF TIBET...
PEDDY, YOU OUGHTA BE MORE CAREFUL WHO TAKES YOUR PICTURE FOR THE NEWSPAPER!
SHUT UP!... WE DON'T WORRY ABOUT THIS TODAY!
SHUT AND ROUSE TE FENN, FATHER PREPARING FOR INFORMAL TIBETAN OCCASIONS, DON'T YOU THINK?
HOW DOES THE BLAND LOOK ON YOU, NICKI?
11

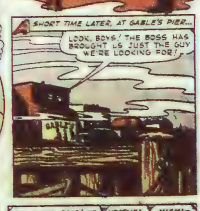
DRAW, REACH FOR THE CEILING AND PUT THE VASE DOWN!
DOWN YOU'RE FIVE MINUTES LATE!
NOW, WHO'S THE ACCOMPLICE OF AMERICAN GANGSTERS?
WE WANT EXACTLY $2,000,000 IN UNCUT DIAMONDS!
HARDLY THE WERE ACCOMPLICE, DOCTOR!
YOU AREN'T GETTING AWAY WITH IT, GUN!
YOU'VE KILLED HIM!
BANG!
BANG!
YEAH, ANY THE SAME THING HAPPENS TO YOU IF YOU DON'T TOSS THE SAFE AND OPEN THAT SAFE!
THE SAFE IS OPEN AND EMPTY!
AND NOW INTO THE CARGO WITH HIM!
LET'S THE DOORBELL WORK!
AND THE DIAMONDS ARE SAFE!
I SHOULD'VE KNOWN WHEN YOU AND JACK BARTON LEFT THE HARBOR ALONE!

DON'T WORRY, BOYS. I'VE MANAGE THINGS HERE. YOU START PREPARING DR. FENN TO TALK AT THE HOSPITAL!
OKAY, BOSS! WE'LL BE WAITING FOR YOU.
RING!
MEANWHILE, AT THE DOOR OF THE CONSULATE...
I WONDER WHO HE IS?
HMM! THE BLONDE! PHANTOM IS ALIVE! THAT SHE'S CUT OUT TO BE!
NICK!—WHAT HAPPENED?
AMERICAN GANGSTERS—THEY'VE ESCAPED! DR. FENN—THEY'VE KILLED THE GUARD! OH, JACKIE!
JACKIE IS IT?
BETTER YOU BOTH GO SAFELY AWAY! NOW! I'LL GET THE DIAMONDS. NOW!
I'VE GOT THE DIAMONDS, NICK!
MUST BE JACK HASTINGS, AIR ADVISOR TO THE FENNS' REPUBLIC!
YOU! B-BUT WHERE?
I'M AFRAID THAT'S A SECRET—EVEN FROM DR. FENN! SEE—HE'S ALWAYS BEEN AFRAID OF ROBBERY...
AND HE REASONED THAT IF ONLY I KNEW WHERE THE DIAMONDS ARE NOBODY COULD GET AT THEM THROUGH HIM!
SOUNDS TO ME AS IF DR. FENN WERE PRETTY CAGEY!
O O O

BUT SUPPOSING WE'RE FORCED TO REVEAL THAT YOU KNOW WHERE THE CACHE IS?
WHAM! THAT MAKES ME A SITTING DUCK-AND NEXT THE GANG'S LIST!
WAIT, JACKIE...

DOES GABLE'S RIEF MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU, BLONDE PHANTOM?
GABLE'S IS THE TOUGHEST WATERFRONT DIVE IN TOWN!

I WAS ONLY HALF LISTENING, BUT I HEARD ONE OF THE GANG MENTION THIS GABLE'S PLACE!
THAT'S OUR LEAD!
WHOEVER THEY ARE, THEY MUST BE VERY CARELESS GANGSTERS!


SHORT TIME LATER, AT GABLE'S PIER...
LOOK, BOYS! THE BOSS HAS BROUGHT US JUST THE GUY WE'RE LOOKING FOR!

HMM! LOOKS LIKE WE'RE BEING MET BY A DELEGATION OF...
WHAT'LL WE HAVE, BUB?

NICE GOING, BOYS! WE NOW HAVE THE BOY WHO KNOWS WHERE THE DIAMONDS ARE!
LIPSTAIRS, CHUMPS!
NICKI! YOU! PART OF THIS GANG?

YES, "JACK-E" DEAR, YOU, BLONDE PHANTOM ARE TAKING A WALK WITH ME—OUTSIDE!
YOU MEAN WE'RE GOING TO SCRATCH EACH OTHER AND PULL HAIR?
I'M NOT SO CRUDE ; I'D RATHER PUSH PENNIES, MY DEAR!
GIVE HER A CHANCE, NICK!!
REALLY, NICK!— A CHIC AUTHORITY ON FASHION USING AN ANTIQUE MURDER METHOD LIKE THIS!
IT MUST BE THE OLD-FASHIONED GIRL COMING OUT IN ME!
THEN I HOPE YOU'RE A GOOD SHOT!
EXCELLENT!
BANG!
AND A FEW SECONDS LATER...
THERE WON'T BE ANY MORE INTERFERENCE FROM HER!
WHEN...
COME ON, BOSS—HE'S CLEARING OUT!
I FINALLY MADE BARTON TALK! THE DIAMONDS ARE IN A PUBLIC LOCKER AT THE RAILROAD STATION!

WELL TAKE THE FLY-BOY ALONG WITH US JUST IN CASE WE HAVEN'T TELLING US THE TRUTH!
DEAR ME, FOXEY— I'VE LOST MY CIRCUIT AND THEY ARE FRIGHTFULLY EXPENSIVE IN THIS COUNTRY!
THAT'S ODD! I MUST HAVE LOST IT SOMEWHERE BETWEEN HERE AND GABLES!
COME ON, BOSS! WE CAN BUY PLENTY OF ORCHIDS AT LANGLEY'S AFTER WE PICK UP THE STUFF!
NO SENSE IN GETTING HURT! WE HAVE TO TAKE A CHANCE ON NICKI'S FEMININITY!...
DRIVE ON, FOXEY!
A HALF HOUR LATER, OUTSIDE LANGLEY'S FLOWER SHOP...
BOYS, THIS MEANS A PROMOTION FOR BOTH OF YOU, IF NICKI SHOWS UP! GET THE PROWL CAR OUT OF SIGHT! I'LL BE INSIDE WAITING TO HANDLE HER!
RIGHT!
Langley Florist
ANOTHER HALF HOUR PASSES...
MAYBE THERE ARE SEVERAL SHOPS AROUND TOWN WHICH SELL RARE ORCHIDS! UH?
I'LL GIVE HER MORE OF A SPORTING CHANCE THAN SHE GAVE ME!
ONE BLACK ORCHID, MAC— AND THIS ONE IS ON THE HOUSE!
37

LAN THAT PISTOL DOWN, BEAUTY!
OHHHH!
SCREAM AGAIN, NICK! BE THERE'S NO HELP COMIN' TO YOUR GANG!
YIIIII!
AS WOMAN TO WOMAN, I THINK YOU'D BETTER WATCH!
OWW!
NICE WORK, BOYS! AND NOW'S THE TIME TO SPRING THE TRAP!
HAD TO KILL THE FAT ONE BLONDE PHANTOM, BUT THE OTHER WILL MAKE A FINE SUBSTITUTE BEFORE A GRAND JURY!
NEXT DAY...
GIVE ME THE CONSERVATIVE WOMAN EVERY TIME...SHE DON'T CRY WHEN THEY'RE TOO BEAUTIFUL. THIS KICK...FOR INSTANCE!
I DON'T KNOW, MARK! GLAMOUR DOES HAVE ITS PLACE
BUT NOT A NEWS PHOTO!! THEY MADE ME MISS THIS EXCLUSIVE PORTRAIT OF PORKY POTTER WHICH THE BLONDE PHANTOM DID SEE THAT CALL IS ALWAYS TAKE UP ON ME!

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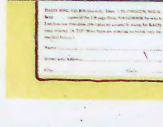

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